

City of Reading
City Council
Work Session
Monday, March 19, 2007

Council Members Present

Vaughn Spencer, President
Stephen Fuhs
Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz
Stratton Marmarou
Dennis Sterner
Maria Baez
Jeff Waltman

Others Present

L. Churchill
C. Younger
C. Jones
D. Binder
D. Hogue
L. Kelleher

Call to Order

President of Council Vaughn Spencer called the work session to order at 7:07 pm.

Managing Director's Report

Managing Director Churchill highlighted the report distributed to Council at the work session. The report includes:

- An update on Eminent Domain Bills being considered by the State Legislature
- Weed and seed trends and application
- East Reading Swimming Association agreement

Councilor Fuhs inquired how the City can provide public funds to benefit a private association. Mr. Churchill described the City's work to define a partnership with East Reading Swimming Association. He stated that the pool is open for public use with an entry fee similar to that applied at the

Schlegel Park Pool. He stated that Public Works Director Jones and the East Reading Swimming Association Board are working to define terms of private membership benefits.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted her agreement with the approach and questioned how the new public/private partnership will apply to those who are currently stockholders. Public Works Director Jones stated that all City pools are experiencing financial difficulties due to decreased membership, leaving little money to repay stockholders who have terminated membership. He noted efforts to educate the swimming association on different fundraising methods that can help ease these financial constraints.

Council President Spencer inquired about increased benefits to stockholders such as priority use rentals. Mr. Churchill replied that these terms are still under discussion with the Association. He stated that these benefits are hoped to increase pool membership.

Councilor Fuhs inquired about the operation and functionality of the Schlegel Park Pool. Public Works Director Jones explained that it was created through the Schlegel endowment. The pool, subsequently constructed, is fully City owned.

Managing Director Churchill stated that in the agreement with East Reading Swimming Association the City will provide funding for capital improvements and take over operational responsibilities. The East Reading Swimming Association will also undertake fundraising responsibilities similar to the Friends of the Public Library Association. The Association's fundraising, if successful, can assist with the capital improvements.

Council President Spencer noted the need to properly define the role of the Association. Councilor Waltman agreed with the approach to forming public/private pools.

Councilor Waltman noted the need for an update on the City's graffiti legislation and a report on how the City Administration intends to deal with the onslaught of graffiti that has appeared around the City.

Managing Director Churchill agreed with the need for a close look at the current graffiti legislation. He stated that currently the City uses the Office of Neighborhood Development and Public Works to remove graffiti.

Waste Water Treatment Plant Project Update

Dave Binder, Esquire stated that this report will provide Council with a status report on the Consent Decree. A timeline was distributed showing the requirements mandated by the Consent Decree. The Consent Decree was signed November 4, 2004 and the contemplated entry date was January 1, 2005. The necessary improvements are expected to be completed by 2012. He noted the differences between transportation issues and collection issues.

The consent decree addresses collection issues; however, transportation issues need to be considered separately. He stated that he is waiting for DEP approval on the new design to the collection system. He suggested using an RFQ (request for qualifications) determine which contractors have the necessary qualifications and experience to complete the job. After the review of the RFQ successful contractors will be invited to submit responses to the City's RFP.

Mr. Binder noted that this part of the project is expected to be complete by September 15, 2007. However, he noted some problems with DEP approval may affect the City's ability to meet this deadline.

Mr. Binder also noted the need for a separate RFP to study the City's system for water billing. Council will be asked to authorize this RFP at the March 26, 2007 regular meeting of Council.

Council President Spencer and Councilor Fuhs questioned the philosophy of spending approximately \$900,000 on two security camera projects when the City needs to spend hundreds of millions of dollars for sewer plant upgrades. They both noted the need for continued discussion and review of the camera project.

Councilor Fuhs updated Council and the Administration on the water systems analysis.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the long term benefits the upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Plant will provide to the City and surrounding municipalities.

All agreed with the need for a thorough due diligence process from start to finish.

Mr. Binder noted that Congress recently passed a Bill that will provide \$1.7 billion to assist with waste water treatment projects; however, the President has stated his intent to veto this Bill if it passes the Senate. He suggested that Council draft letters to Congressman Gerlach and other members of Congress and Senate urging their support of this Bill.

Public Works Director Jones explained the difference between an RFQ and an RFP. He stated that using an RFQ will allow the Administration to examine the qualifications of contractors which will provide them with the ability to invite RFP responses from only those qualified to complete the project.

Ms. Hoag distributed a sample Request for Proposal for a multi-phase waste water rate and rate structure analysis and a cost estimate sheet for integral engineering services related to waste water treatment plant projects currently in progress.

Council President Spencer inquired if Black and Veatch's involvement in the design phase of the project will provide them with inside knowledge allowing them to obtain the contract for the construction phase.

Public Works Director Jones explained that the information selected will be provided publicly to provide a level playing field for all.

Councilor Sterner inquired if a Council representative could participate on the committee to review the RFQ and RFP submittals. The Administration agreed to allow Council to participate on this committee.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired if a pre-proposal conference will be used in this process. Public Works Director Jones replied affirmatively, adding that the results of the conference will also be publicized.

Councilor Marmarou inquired if the City has received any feedback on the proposed project from the involved surrounding municipalities. Mr. Binder stated that some surrounding municipalities have inquired about the project.

Mr. Binder requested that Council recess to an executive session to discuss litigation matters concerning the waste water treatment plant.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Fuhs, to adjourn the Work Session.

Council President Spencer stated that following the executive session on litigation, Council would not be reconvening.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda A. Kelleher, City Clerk